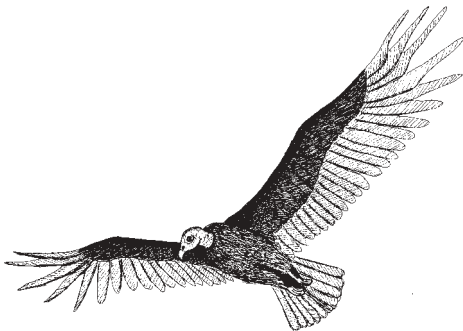




Neotropical Migrants



Turkey Vulture

What is a neotropical migratory bird?

Just as human “snowbirds” travel south to Arizona to escape harsh winters, many birds that breed in North America spend their winters in warmer, tropical climes. Birds that breed in Canada or the United States, but winter in Mexico, Central, or

South America, are known as neotropical migratory birds. Of the more than 500 species of birds found in Arizona, about 240 are neotropical migrants, including some of our most beloved birds such as hummingbirds, warblers, orioles and swallows.

How Does the Park Fit In?

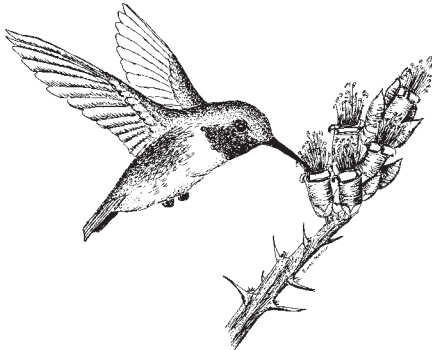
Southeastern Arizona’s isolated mountain ranges and river corridors are virtual desert oases, and thus are the preferred pathway for many neotropical migrants traveling to or from their North American breeding grounds. For example, the lush vegetation along the San Pedro river provides food and cover for weary migrants, making it a superhighway for neotropical migrants.

At Saguaro National Park, the Rincon Mountains provide breeding grounds or stopover points for several species such as red-faced warblers, painted redstarts, hepatic tanagers and zone-tailed hawks. The park also conserves a portion of another biome unique to the region, the saguaro cactus forest. Saguaros provide nest sites for cavity nesting birds like elf owls, purple martins and ash-throated flycatchers.

Why Are Neotropical Birds in Trouble?

Migrating birds face a long, hard journey between their summer and winter homes. In addition to natural perils such as predation, storms and drought, neotropical migrants must also contend with human-caused threats. During their journey, migrants may encounter deadly herbicides, pesticides and industrial pollution. More importantly, an increasing number are losing their homes and migratory stop-overs to ranching, farming, timber harvesting and urbanization.

In places where development has broken breeding and wintering areas into small, isolated patches, predators can more easily find nests or roosting birds. Few people realize that housecats are the number one predator of birds in developed areas.



Broad-tailed Hummingbird

What does this mean for you?

Neotropical migrants have great aesthetic, ecological and economic value. The arrival and departure of these migrants, like the white-winged dove in Southeastern Arizona, marks the changing of the seasons. The beauty of these birds heightens the quality of our lives. They have integral roles in our environment as agents of insect control, flower pollination and seed dis-

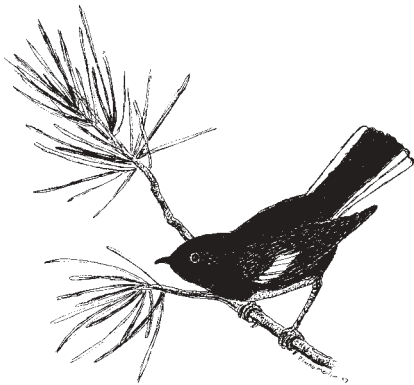
persal. Their sensitivity to environmental degradation makes them valuable indicators of the quality of the environment we share. Southeastern Arizona's rich assortment of neotropical migrants attracts thousands of birdwatchers every year. These birders bring millions of dollars to the state's economy.

What can you do to help?

There are many things you can do to help conserve neotropical migrants while helping other wildlife in the process. You can landscape with native vegetation, put nest boxes in your backyard, support organic farming, attach a bell to your cat's collar and simply use less water while here in the arid southwest so that rivers like the San Pedro will remain flowing for years to come.

You can also help by supporting some of the groups that are working to conserve neotropical migrants. Partners in Flight (PIF) is a non-profit international coalition of private individuals, government agencies and non-governmental organizations committed to conserving neotropical migrants and other nongame landbirds on a global scale. Arizona Partners in Flight (APIF) is an offshoot of this international program. APIF works to maintain healthy populations of nongame landbirds and their habi-

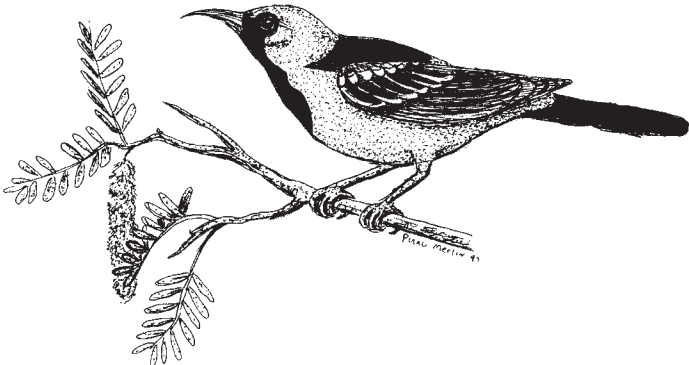
tats in Arizona while cooperating with neighboring states and Mexico. The National Audubon Society (NAS) strives to conserve natural environments and wildlife, with a focus on birds. These groups depend largely on public support and involvement. To subscribe to the free PIF newsletter write to: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 900, Washington D.C. 20036. You can access up-to-date information on the web at [www.pwrc.nbs.gov/pif/](http://www.pwrc.nbs.gov/pif/). APIF information can be found at [www.nbs.nau.edu/FNF/PIF](http://www.nbs.nau.edu/FNF/PIF). The NAS homepage is [www.audubon.org/](http://www.audubon.org/)



Painted Redstart



Ash-throated Flycatcher



Hooded Oriole